



Secretariat

13 April 2010

Information circular*

To: Members of delegations and staff
From: The Under-Secretary-General for Management
Subject: **First day of issue, 6 May 2010: "One Planet, One Ocean: fiftieth anniversary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission" stamps and prestige booklets**

Commemorative stamps

1. On Thursday, 6 May 2010, the United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) will issue six set-tenant mini-sheets of four stamps each (for a total of 24 commemorative stamps), on the theme "One Planet, One Ocean", on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Three prestige booklets will also be issued on the same day.

2. The stamps were designed by Wyland (United States of America), a marine life artist who is known as one of the most distinctive creative influences in the United States, and is a leading advocate for marine resource conservation. An accomplished painter, sculptor, photographer, writer and scuba diver, he has travelled the farthest reaches of the globe for more than 25 years, capturing the raw power and beauty of the undersea universe.

3. The issue will consist of six mini-sheets of four stamps in denominations of \$0.44, \$0.98, SwF 0.85, SwF 1.00, €0.55 and €0.65, (United States equivalents: SwF 0.35; \$0.78, SwF 1.00; \$0.92, €0.55; \$0.74 and €0.65; \$0.88, subject to exchange rate fluctuation.)

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 6 August 2010.



One Planet, One Ocean: fiftieth anniversary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

4. Oceans and their adjacent seas cover more than two thirds of the surface of the Earth. The living and non-living resources they contain are a necessary element for the survival of life on the planet. It is the oceans that make life on Earth uniquely sustainable within the solar system. The sustainability of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the climate in which we live is dependent upon the oceans.

5. The oceans also provide for the cultural, social and economic well-being of the majority of the world's population. Sustainable development is highly dependent on the wise management of the oceans and coasts based on scientific knowledge.

6. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was founded in 1960 to promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity-building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas and to apply the knowledge gained to the improved management, sustainable development and protection of the marine environment, and to assist the decision-making processes of its 136 member States. The Commission was established on the basis of the recognition that:

the oceans, covering some seventy per cent of the earth's surface, exert a profound influence on mankind and even on all forms of life on Earth ... In order to properly interpret the full value of the oceans to mankind, they must be studied from many points of view. While pioneering research and new ideas usually come from individuals and small groups, many aspects of oceanic investigations present far too formidable a task to be undertaken by any one nation or even a few nations.

7. In addition to its member States, the Commission is composed of an Assembly, an Executive Council, subsidiary bodies and a secretariat based in Paris.

8. Fifty years after its establishment, the Commission continues to play a pivotal role in developing and coordinating global ocean observations through the Global Ocean Observing System, in saving lives and property in coastal areas through establishing multi-hazard warning systems, and in making available up-to-date, science-based information and knowledge on the status and functioning of oceans and coasts.

9. The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission in 2010 will start on 8 June and will coincide with World Oceans Day, designated as 8 June in 2008 by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/111. The Day creates an opportunity to raise global awareness of the current challenges facing the international community in protecting oceans, their habitats and the millions who depend on them for a living. For example, the theme for the 2009 observance of World Oceans Day was "Our Oceans, Our Responsibility", in order to emphasize the threat posed to the vitality of the oceans by human activity and climate change.

10. In a message marking the Day, the Secretary-General stated that human activities were taking a terrible toll on the world's oceans and seas. The objectives of World Oceans Day emphasized an individual and collective duty to protect the marine environment and carefully manage its resources.

General information

11. For the convenience of collectors, UNPA at Headquarters will provide prepared and cancelled New York first-day covers on the UNPA official first-day cachets **only**. Members of delegations and the staff can obtain these items on Thursday, 6 May, at the UNPA sales counter in the concourse of the General Assembly Building, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

12. First-day-of-issue cancellations can be obtained at a temporary United States Postal Service substation located outside the United Nations Bookshop in the concourse of the General Assembly Building, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

13. Please visit the UNPA sales counter in the concourse of the General Assembly Building, which is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

14. Information on United Nations stamps can be accessed on the Internet at <http://unstamps.un.org>.